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## Helping Women Farmers Forge a Path to Success in Ethiopia



USDA

Deputy Agriculture Secretary Krysta Harden meets Ethiopian farm owner Yetemwork Tilahun, who has built a successful dairy operation with support from USDA.

During a 2014 trip to Africa, Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Krysta Harden visited Ethiopia to see firsthand how the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is helping the country's agriculture sector to grow and thrive.

As part of her trip, Harden visited a small-scale, woman-owned dairy farm to see how a USDA-supported project has boosted milk production through better feeding practices and farm management. In alignment with the goals of the Feed the Future initiative, USDA's Food for Progress program helps developing countries modernize and strengthen their agriculture sectors. In Ethiopia, USDA has partnered with ACDI/VOCA under Food for Progress to implement a project that improves food security by helping small-scale farmers and business owners manage livestock more effectively.

Deputy Secretary Harden met with Yetemwork Tilahun at her dairy farm near the town of Mojo, about 50 miles south of Addis Ababa. There, she saw firsthand the positive impact USDA's support has had on milk production, which has generated an alternative revenue stream for Tilahun's hardworking family. Tilahun explained how the project has allowed her to expand her operation from a single dairy cow to her current herd of 10 crossbred Holsteins, each valued at about \$3,000. As a result of this expansion, Tilahun not only provides her family with fresh milk, but generates extra income by selling surplus production to several restaurants and hotels, as well as the nearby cooperative.

This growth has also lifted the neighboring community, as Tilahun now employs seven people to help with the increased workload. Her 11-year-old son is also gaining exposure to good farm management, and she hopes that he will become a large-scale farmer when he grows up. Her husband handles the milk sales and is also responsible for purchasing feed ingredients from the local cooperative.

Deputy Secretary Harden learned that as a result of USDA's support, the farm is largely self-sustaining, growing its own forage for its dairy and beef animals. Tilahun also grows teff, Ethiopia's staple grain, using it to make a traditional bread called injera and selling the surplus grain in the local market. She is so resourceful, in fact, she even developed a biogas unit to compost livestock waste and power her home.

The Deputy Secretary's visit demonstrated clearly the impact of USDA's investments in agricultural development. This project has helped position Tilahun's farm as an engine of local economic growth and the model for other dairy owners in the region.